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November 15, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair  
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Supervisor Don Knabe  
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From: Philip L. Browning  
Director

*Philip L. Browning  
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**HANNAH'S CHILDREN'S HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW**

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Hannah's Children's Homes Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in March 2016. The FFA has three offices; one in the First Supervisorial District, one in San Bernardino County, one in Orange County, and provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children. According to the FFA's Program Statement, its stated purpose is, "to ensure these children are provided with a continuum of care, nurturance and services, which will meet their individualized needs, as well as those of their families."

The QAR looked at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency, and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the FFA's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment.

In May 2016, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss results of the QAR. The FFA did not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), as the FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all focus areas of the QAR.

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If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

PLB:KR  
KDR:rds

#### Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer  
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee  
Connie Frank, Executive Director, Hannah's Children's Homes Foster Family Agency  
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division  
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

**HANNAH'S CHILDREN'S HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY  
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)  
FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016**

**SCOPE OF REVIEW**

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Hannah's Children's Homes Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in March 2016. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the FFA's service delivery and to ensure that the FFA is providing children with quality care and services in a safe environment, which includes physical care, social and emotional support, education and workforce readiness, and other services to protect and enhance their growth and development.

The QAR is an in-depth case review and interview process designed to assess how children and their families are benefiting from services received and how well the services are working. The QAR utilizes a six-point rating scale as a *yardstick* for measuring the situation observed in specific focus areas. The QAR assessed the following focus areas:

**Status Indicators:**

- Safety
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Visitation

**Practice Indicators:**

- Engagement
- Service Needs
- Assessment & Linkages
- Teamwork
- Tracking & Adjustment

For Status Indicators, the QAR focuses on the child's functioning during the most recent 30 day period and for Practice Indicators, the QAR focuses on the FFA's service delivery during the most recent 90 day period.

For the purpose of this QAR, interviews were conducted with three focus children, three Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Workers (CSWs), three FFA staff members, and three certified foster parents.

At the time of the QAR, the FFA supervised 66 DCFS placed children in 33 certified foster homes. The focus children's average number of placements was four, their overall average length of placement was 11 months and their average age was 12. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the Contract Administration Division's (CAD's) 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review.

**QAR SCORING**

The FFA received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS court reports and updated case plans, interviews with the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers, and the focus children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

<b>Focus Area</b>	<b>Minimum Acceptable Score</b>	<b>FFA QAR Score</b>	<b>FFA QAR Rating</b>
<b>Safety</b> - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children are free of abuse, neglect and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6 - Optimal Safety Status	The focus children have a highly safe living situation with fully reliable and competent caregivers and are protected well at all times. Protective strategies are fully operative and dependable.
<b>Permanency</b> - The degree to which the focus children are living with certified foster parents, who are likely to remain in this role until the focus children reach adulthood, or the focus children are in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the focus children, the FFA staff, certified foster parents, DCFS CSWs and if applicable, Department of Probation Officers (DPOs) support the plan.	5	5 - Good Status	The focus children have substantial permanence. The focus children live in a family setting that the focus children, FFA staff, caregivers and team members have confidence will endure lifelong.

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Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
<b>Placement Stability</b> - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children's daily living, learning and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions. Known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruptions.	5	5 - Good Stability	The focus children have substantial stability in placement and school settings with only planned changes and no more than one disruption in either setting over the past 30 days.
<b>Visitation</b> - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents support maintaining important connections with significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visitation and other means.	5	5 - Substantially Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation & Connections	Generally effective family connections are being sought for all significant family members/NREFMs through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies. All appropriate family members/NREFMs have regular visits.
<b>Engagement</b> - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents working with the focus children, their family members/NREFMs and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to concentrate on the focus children's strengths and needs.	5	5 - Good Engagement Efforts	To a strong degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, DPOs (if applicable), caregivers and the focus children feel heard and respected. Reports indicate that good, consistent efforts are being used.

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Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
<b>Service Needs</b> - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children work toward ensuring the focus children's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the focus children's unique needs.	5	5 - Good Supports and Services	A good and substantial array of supports and services substantially matches intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The services are generally helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes.
<b>Assessment &amp; Linkages</b> - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs understand the focus children's strengths, needs, preferences and underlying needs and services provided are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	5 - Good Assessment and Understanding	The focus children's functioning and support systems are generally understood. Information necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs and preferences is frequently updated.
<b>Teamwork</b> - The degree to which the "right people" for the focus children and their family members/NREFMs, have formed a working team that meets, talks and/or makes plans together.	5	5 - Good Teamwork	The team contains most of the important supporters and decision-makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed a good, dependable working system that meets, talks and/or plans together.

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Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
<b>Tracking &amp; Adjustment -</b> The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs are carefully tracking the progress that the focus children are making, changing family circumstances, attainment of goals and planned outcomes.	5	5 - Good Tracking and Adjustment Process	Intervention strategies, supports and services being provided to the focus children are generally responsive to changing conditions. Frequent monitoring, tracking and communication of the focus children's status is occurring.

The OHCMD conducted the last QAR of the FFA in May 2015, and noted an opportunity for improvement in the focus area of Safety. In December 2015, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support to address methods for improvement in this area. Based on the information below, it appears that the FFA showed improvement in the area of Safety, and the FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all focus areas on their 2015-2016 QAR.

**STATUS INDICATORS**  
(Measured over last 30 days)

Status Indicators	Safety	Permanency	Placement Stability	Visitation
<b>2014-2015 Scores</b>	5	5	5	5
<b>2015-2016 Scores</b>	6	5	5	5

In the area of Safety, the OHCMD found that the FFA had fully implemented their 2014-2015 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). During the last QAR, the OHCMD found that the FFA was not reporting Special Incidents timely. To address this, the FFA reviewed its policy and procedures to ensure guidelines for reporting Special Incidents and child safety concerns are enforced. The FFA trained their certified foster parents on reporting Special Incidents, as well as ensuring appropriate supervision and safety of the placed children. If the FFA determines that a placed child is presenting with safety concern, the FFA arranges necessary treatment services and works with the certified foster parents on the development of a safety plan. Additionally, the FFA Social Worker supervisor now reviews and approves all Special Incidents daily, to ensure that all incidents are thoroughly documented and reported timely. Further, this topic is discussed during the FFA's monthly staff meetings. The FFA Social Worker also conducts announced and unannounced visits to the certified foster homes to check on the safety and well-being of the placed children and environment safety. Based on

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the interviews with the focus children, the DCFS CSWs, the FFA Social Workers, and the certified foster parents, the focus children experience a safe living environment. The focus children reported they feel cared for and protected. The focus children also shared that they can express their concerns and their concerns are immediately addressed by their certified foster parents and the FFA Social Worker. The DCFS CSWs reported that the FFA staff is committed to the focus children and that they felt the FFA staff placed the focus children's safety as a priority.

In the area of Permanency, the FFA continues to provide a good quality of services that correspond with each focus child's permanency plan, and the FFA staff demonstrates efforts to assist the focus children in achieving their permanency goals. The FFA ensures the FFA Social Worker, the focus children, and the certified foster parents are aware of the focus children's permanency plans, and they meet regularly with their DCFS CSWs to discuss permanency goals and options prior to developing a Needs and Services Plan (NSP). For example, one focus child's permanency plan is Family Reunification; however, at this time, there is a restraining order set by the Criminal Court against the focus child's biological parents. The treatment team is working closely with the focus child's DCFS CSW on a concurrent case plan goal of legal guardianship with the focus child's current certified foster mother. The second focus child is a Non-Minor Dependent (NMD); the permanency plan is Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA). This focus child's certified foster mother is providing guidance and teaching the NMD focus child life skills needed to live independently. The focus child is currently attending school at a local community college. The focus child plans to continue residing with her certified foster mother under extended foster care until she earns her Associate of Arts degree and then plans to transition into on-campus housing at a university to pursue a Bachelor's degree. The third focus child's permanency goal is also PPLA. Adoption or legal guardianship with her certified foster parent is being explored. The FFA Social Worker is working with the focus child's DCFS CSW to ensure that the permanency goal is in the focus child's best interest.

The focus children have been stable, with no placement or school disruptions while in their current certified foster homes. The FFA staff and the certified foster parents are committed to working with the focus children, and they take responsibility in ensuring that the focus children's needs are met. The focus children reported they feel secure and that they are doing well in their certified foster homes. They appear comfortable and reported they like the certified foster homes in which they are currently placed. The certified foster mother and the FFA Social Worker shared that initially, the first focus child was angry about being placed in protective custody by DCFS. The focus child had a negative attitude and was disrespectful toward her DCFS CSW and her certified foster mother. However, because of all the efforts made by her certified foster mother and the FFA staff in making her feel safe and cared for, the focus child is adjusting well. The second focus child has bonded with her certified foster parents and has developed a positive, respectful relationship with two other NMDs who live in the certified foster home. The third focus child has also established a very good relationship with her certified foster parents. According to the FFA Social Worker, the third focus child has demonstrated emotional growth and maturity; the focus child has adapted to the supportive, structured home environment. The DCFS CSWs for the focus children indicated they are pleased with the placement stability the FFA has provided for the focus children.

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The DCFS CSWs also expressed that they see commitment and dedication in the certified foster parents.

In the area of Visitation, the FFA staff and the certified foster parents encourage the focus children to maintain regular contact with family members and other significant adults in their lives. The second focus child has visits with her mother and siblings. As a NMD, she makes her own visitation arrangements. The visits occur during the week and on weekends. The focus child and her certified foster parents reported that the visits have gone well. The first focus child currently has no visits with her parents, as there is a restraining order. Visitation between the third focus child and her parents is inconsistent, as her parents do not show up for scheduled visits. However, although these two focus children do not visit with their parents, the FFA Social Workers work collaboratively with their DCFS CSWs, certified foster parents, and other caregivers to ensure regular and consistent visitation with their siblings. The certified foster parents and the FFA Social Workers also assist the focus children in making telephone calls to maintain communication with their family members.

**PRACTICE INDICATORS**  
*(Measured over last 90 days)*

<b>Practice Indicators</b>	<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Service Needs</b>	<b>Assessment &amp; Linkages</b>	<b>Teamwork</b>	<b>Tracking &amp; Adjustment</b>
<b>2014-2015 Scores</b>	5	5	5	5	5
<b>2015-2016 Scores</b>	5	5	5	5	5

In the area of Engagement, the FFA continues to make good efforts to engage the focus children and key people in decisions being made for them. Based on the interviews, it appears the FFA staff maintains good communication with the DCFS CSWs, the focus children, the certified foster parents, school teachers, therapists, and their siblings' caregivers. The focus children reported sharing positive relationships with their certified foster parents and the FFA Social Workers, as they are people that they could count on.

In the areas of Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, and Tracking & Adjustment, the FFA continues to provide quality services and continually assesses the focus children's needs and status to ensure appropriateness of services and interventions. The FFA provides a good array of services that fully match intervention strategies identified for the focus children, such as counseling, in-home independent living skills training, tutoring, transportation, and job search assistance. The FFA generally understands the focus children's functioning and support systems, and information necessary to understand the focus children and their families' strengths and needs is frequently updated. The FFA Social Worker supervisor meets with the FFA Social Worker biweekly to assess and discuss the focus children's individual needs and progress. The FFA Social Worker and the certified foster parents maintain open communication with the focus children, and through daily observation, gain a

clear picture of the focus children's functioning, strengths and their needs. The FFA staff and the certified foster parents continuously monitor, track and communicate the focus children's status and progress with the team members and work together to ensure the focus children's needs are met. For example, the second focus child disclosed it is difficult for her to be social or friendly with people who are not related to her. The focus child expressed wanting to develop friendships with other students at her community college, but she finds it challenging to start a conversation. Her FFA Social Worker suggested that the focus child join a club or meet up group, obtain on-campus employment, or volunteer in the community as ways to meet and develop relationships with others. Through ongoing role playing, discussion and encouragement, the focus child engaged in academic conversation with her psychology professor and often meets after class for networking and professional development. She is also considering part-time employment on campus.

In the area of Teamwork, the FFA has continued to demonstrate a good job of leading the team and ensuring the team meets regularly to prepare treatment plans and discuss the needs of the placed children. On a quarterly basis, the FFA invites the DCFS CSWs, the certified foster parents and the focus children, if age appropriate, to participate in developing the focus children's NSPs. The FFA staff works to ensure a rapport has been developed between the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, certified foster parents, the focus children, and appropriate family members. The FFA Social Worker meets with the focus children and certified foster parents during their visits to the certified foster homes or after monitored visits to discuss their progress and concerns. The focus children and certified foster parents reported feeling they are a part of the team, and they feel supported by the other team members. The FFA Social Workers also meet at least monthly with FFA administration to review and discuss the focus children's progress. The DCFS CSWs reported that they have built a good rapport with the FFA Social Worker and certified foster parents, and they stay in constant communication.

#### **NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES**

In December 2015 and April 2016, the OHCMD provided the FFA with technical support related to the CAD's 2014-2015 Contract Compliance Review findings in the areas of Facility and Environment and Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery. Technical support was provided on how the FFA can ensure that monetary and clothing allowance logs are well maintained, that certified foster parents are participating in the development of the NSPs and that updated NSPs are timely developed by the FFA Social Workers.

In May 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all focus areas; a QIP was not requested of the FFA. However, the OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training and consultation to the FFA.